



**Developing a Successful and Adoptable Business Blueprint for Food Rescue**

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# **I. Introduction**

## **Introduction to Food Insecurity and Food Rescue**

Within the United States there are a rising number of communities that are underserved and considered food insecure. Defined by the USDA as a “household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food,” food insecurity can lead to long-term damaging health consequences (USDA, 2017). In addition, the lack of affordable nutritious food, and prevalence of cheap, processed food has led to higher obesity and diet-related disease rates among low income communities (Bhurosy and Jeewon, 2014). Food is wasted by both individuals and retailers. Americans waste about 40% of food per day, which represents 1,400 calories per person per day on a per capita basis (Hall et al., 2009; Lovin’ Spoonfuls, “Food Rescue FAQ,” 2017). Perishable food is consistently discarded by vendors before it has become inedible often because retailers think it will not be purchased by customers, whether or not this is due to appearance, and thus deem as unsellable “waste” (Chandler, 2016; Jacobs, 2014). Additionally, perishable items that are near or at “sell-by” date are discarded because this date tells stores how long to display the product for inventory management and quality purposes (USDA, 2016). “Sell-by” denotes quality, and yet the food is still safe to consume beyond expiration for *at least* a day (depending on the product and with proper temperature storage) (Food Donation Connection, 2014). Food rescues can take advantage of “sell-by” dates as the food comes off store shelves and remains safe for consumption, retaining best quality with same-day pick-up, delivery, and consumption.

Food rescue bridges the gap between excess and access by connecting grocery stores, farmers, wholesale producers, and other retailers with “excess” to organizations such as food

banks, community programs, and local meal programs and social services whose communities need access to healthy produce and perishable foods.

Not only are food rescue services effective in alleviating food insecurity by increasing access to healthy food, but they also help curb the release of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Food discarded into a landfill is anaerobically broken down by bacteria, producing methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), a potent greenhouse gas (US EPA, 2015). Though methane has a shorter atmospheric lifetime than carbon dioxide, its warming potential is nearly 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide in the short-term because of its ability to trap radiation. Given that methane effectively absorbs radiation and slows the rate at which solar energy escapes to space, it has a greater ability to warm the planet and contribute to global warming (Vaidyanathan, 2015). By reducing and/or preventing food from going into landfills, food rescues have a considerable impact on climate change as they can reduce the amount of methane produced and emitted into the atmosphere.

### **Introduction to Lovin' Spoonfuls**

Lovin' Spoonfuls [LS] is a nonprofit food rescue service dedicated to facilitating the rescue and distribution of healthy, fresh food that would otherwise be discarded. It has been operating in the Greater Boston and MetroWest areas since 2010 and has grown substantially. Lovin' Spoonfuls connects a network of approximately 70 food vendors, including grocery stores, farmers markets, and other wholesale retailers, with more than 150 nonprofit services who distribute this food to families and individuals in the community. It serves more than 35,000 individuals with approximately 60,000 pounds of food per week. As of this year, there are six

refrigerated trucks that run Monday through Friday on a set schedule, with each truck visiting five to seven food vendors per day and completing same-day delivery to beneficiaries, including food banks, nonprofit organizations, and other community partners of Lovin' Spoonfuls who receive and redistribute the food donations to those in need. These schedules are established based on the needs of its partners, such as storage capacity, volume, and type of product sought out. Lovin' Spoonfuls' operations consist of 15 employees. The business is reliant on grants and donations for financing, and its financial contributors consist of grant foundations, corporate partnerships, financial institutions, individual donors, and fundraising events. Our main points of contact at the company were Lauren Palumbo, the chief operating officer, and Joel Simonson, a food rescue coordinator who will soon be transferring to the business development team. We communicated with them through bi-weekly video calls and regular emails.

### **Overall Goals and Related Deliverables**

As Lovin' Spoonfuls has become more successful, gained more attention in the media, and grown its presence outside of greater Boston, it has had companies and individuals from across the country reach out for recommendations on how to adopt and implement a similar business model. Given the fast-paced nature of the business and size of the team, it is often difficult for team members to succinctly, yet fully, respond to such requests and thus eager individuals and companies are often referred to other sites and resources. In addition, operational constraints and opportunities such as regulations and local needs of the community can differ depending on where people are looking to operate. Lovin' Spoonfuls does not have a one-size fits all model. As a result of the high demand for information to replicate its successful food

rescue business, Lovin’ Spoonfuls is looking to build their own version of a sharable, tangible—and most importantly—adaptable “blueprint” of their business model. With this blueprint, LS hopes to be able to provide better resources and information to advice-seeking companies and individuals to help them expand their own businesses in efforts to reduce food insecurity.

Using Lovin’ Spoonfuls as a template for a successful business model, the goal of this project is to develop a blueprint of an adoptable business model for food rescue businesses across the United States. This blueprint is in the form of a slide deck that clearly outlines and discusses the necessary steps required to create and run a food rescue business in addition to highlighting the key characteristics and crucial traits of what makes such a business successful. Lovin’ Spoonfuls will be able to share this slide deck in print and online with individuals and companies looking to get involved in this space who can use the information in the deck to develop and enhance their own ideas and business models.

## **II. Methodology**

### **Research on Food Rescue and Related Policies**

Our first step was to obtain content and background information on the need for food rescues and why companies like Lovin’ Spoonfuls are in such high demand. We also felt that understanding and including any federal or state policies that support food rescue services in our final deliverable would encourage emerging food rescue businesses to research their own state or local policies prior to getting involved in the space and expanding their business operations. We limited our research on these policies to the federal level and included case studies from

Massachusetts and Vermont to give prospective companies and eager individuals a sense of the types of existing legislation.

The first federal policy relevant to our topic was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on October 1, 1996. Known as the Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996, it was created to encourage food donation to nonprofit organizations for distribution by minimizing liability. This law in particular makes it easier to donate “apparently wholesome food” by excluding donor liability except in terms of gross negligence (USDA, “US Food Waste,” 2017). The Emerson Act fosters a more lenient donation process, protecting individuals and companies from civil and criminal liability should the product donated (in good faith) cause later harm to the recipient or consumer.

The second relevant federal policy built upon the legislation of the Emerson Good Samaritan Act of 1996, and is known as the US Federal Food Donation Act of 2008. This law in particular encourages federal agencies to donate excess food to nonprofit organizations and continues to utilize the exemption for civil and criminal liability provided for in the 1996 law. The purpose of the act is to further encourage agencies and corporations to donate “excess and apparently wholesome food” to nonprofit organizations who work to feed and support food insecure individuals who have inconsistent access to food in the United States (Congressional Research Service, 2008). Both of the policies aforementioned are relevant to food rescue because they support such services, in that agencies and businesses are exempt from civil and criminal liability (except in the cases of gross negligence) thus are encouraged to donate excess food to nonprofit organizations, further growing the need for food rescue businesses countrywide.

To further supplement our research, we chose to conduct case studies of food waste-related policies in Massachusetts and Vermont, to give prospective food rescues an idea of some of the legislation they may face that could potentially support or hinder the establishment and growth of their businesses. We begin by briefly looking at Massachusetts, where Lovin' Spoonfuls currently operates. In 1990, the Massachusetts state legislation first introduced a waste ban for easy-to-recycle and toxic materials, and has phased in additional “waste bans” overtime. In October 2014, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection implemented a commercial food-waste ban. One of the more aggressive mandatory food recycling policies to-date, the ban is on the disposal of commercial organic wastes by businesses and institutions that dispose of one ton or more of these materials per week. It requires that organic waste such as food scraps and expired packaged foods be diverted away from landfills and sent to food pantries, compost facilities, or anaerobic digestion facilities (Leschin-Hoar, 2014). This waste ban is particularly significant because it supports the operations of food rescues by encouraging commercial businesses to dispose of their organic waste properly.

Vermont's Act 148 is less commercially focused than the Massachusetts Waste Ban, but is a similar law geared toward individual action, enacted in 2012. The act is a universal recycling and composting law that provides Vermonters with a new set of systems, tools, and standardized labels to encourage and help them keep as much waste as possible out of landfills. In recognizing Vermont's flat diversion rates and expansion of recyclable and compostables markets, the state has created a solution that plans to phase in tactics and tools by 2020 to reduce the amount of waste going into landfills (CSWD, 2017). Beginning in 2015, it was required that haulers who offered curbside trash pickups had to adopt a “Pay-As-You-Throw” variable price structure to



accurately price household trash and be an incentive to reduce the amount of recyclables in the trash. 2016 called for the Clean Wood Ban to go into effect for everyone, which forbade landfilling any wood that had never been painted, glued, or stained. Finally, in 2018, the law will require that haulers must offer collection of food scraps, and in 2020, food scraps will be banned from landfills entirely. Though Act 148 is not as closely related to food rescue operations as is the Massachusetts Waste Ban, it is still important to note that policies regarding food waste exist. With the examples of the two federal policies and case studies for Massachusetts and Vermont, it is evident that the presence of these policies can help jumpstart the operations of food rescues by raising awareness about the pressing issue as well as supporting and encouraging the proper disposal of waste by individuals and commercial businesses.

### **Visual Matrix of Lovin' Spoonfuls and Business Model Blueprint**

We created a matrix that helps visualize the relationships Lovin' Spoonfuls created in its early stages with food donors, beneficiary organizations, and early-stage employees. We have also included descriptions of what the team looks like in 2017. The Business Model Blueprint (see Section III Results) fills in the gaps between each to illustrate how Lovin' Spoonfuls grew and to highlight the key characteristics that were vital in helping it do so. The early stage matrix is the onset to the blueprint. It tells Ashley's story of how she recognized food was being wasted everywhere and decided to intervene. One day, she asked to see the back of Trader Joe's grocery store in Brookline. She saw piles of fresh vegetables and food destined for the landfill, asked if she could take it. Luckily, the manager was receptive to her request. She drove the still-fresh food in her personal vehicle to nearby Pine Street Inn shelter where the food was graciously

accepted. At first, nothing about her actions screamed “business.” She had simply identified a pragmatic solution, and with the help of her cousin as another driver, they began contacting more stores looking for excess food and more community centers that had a demand for, but no supply of, healthy perishables, and thus began Ashley’s food rescue network.

### Beginning Stages of the Team

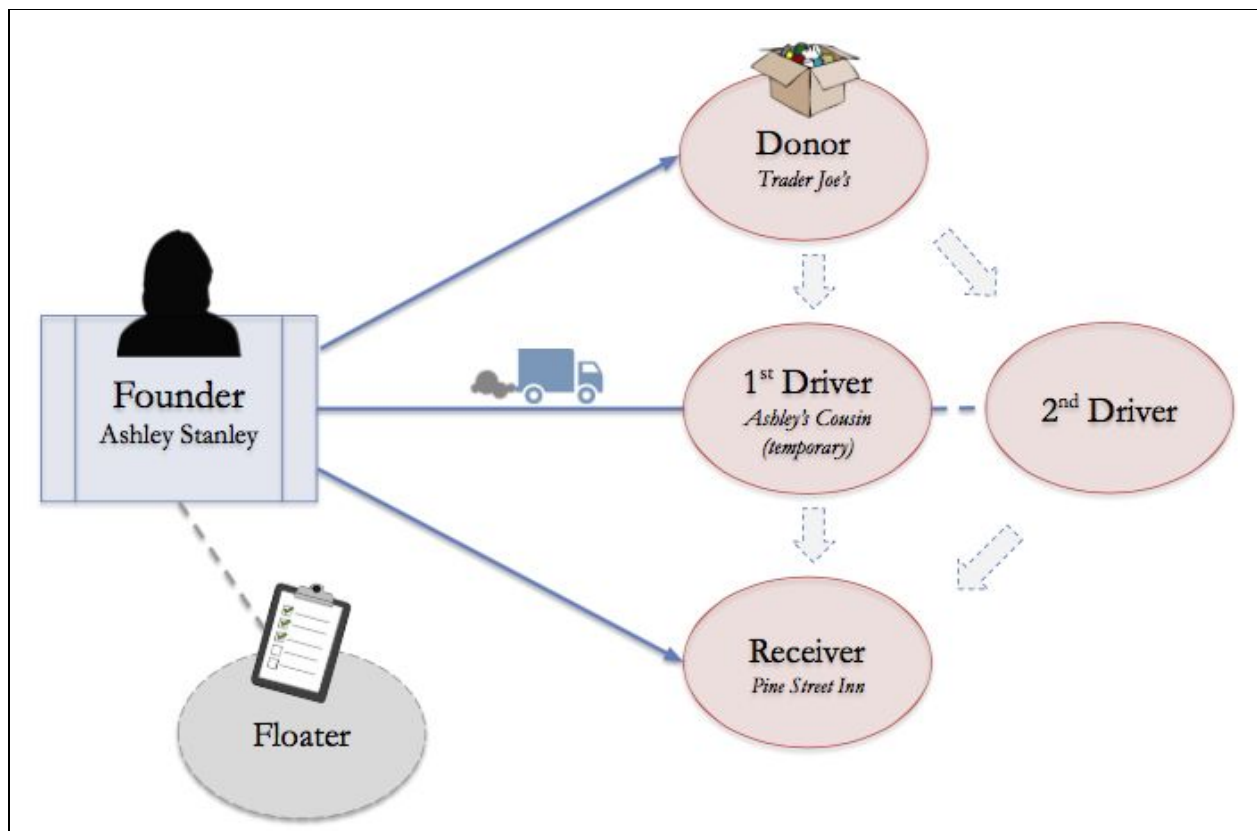


Figure 1. Beginning Stages of the Team in 2010.

Between 2010 and 2013, Ashley was managing the business with only two other employees. Her cousin had been a temporary partner, so she hired her first real food coordinator (driver) and soon after, a development manager. Ashley was fortunate to have a trust fund that

“seeded” LS, she said in an email interview, which she could put towards initial employees and supplies to get the organization running. During this time, Ashley was searching for small investments and applying for funding. In 2012, Lovin’ Spoonfuls received social impact awards of \$50,000 from MassChallenge and \$30,000 from the John W. Henry Family Foundation. With this new financial foundation, Ashley was able to expand.

In 2013, Ashley made an impactful and strategic decision to hire Lauren Palumbo as director of operations. Not only did Lauren become a crucial member of the team handling more than expected with “outstanding performance,” but she initially came in to take over day-to-day operations while Ashley moved towards strategic planning, board development and growth. Before Lauren joined in March of 2013, there were no designed routes, no inventory, no schedule, and no management of operations. Lauren’s addition to the burgeoning operation proved highly valuable to their growth, so much so that the LS team includes daily operations manager and development manager as two of the four to five “bare minimum” employees needed in building a successful food rescue.

With the grants and other funding sources, Ashley hired four more full-time food coordinators between 2013 and 2015. The use of full-time employees rather than part-time or volunteers has been repeatedly highlighted as extremely important by the LS team and partners alike. Full-time food coordinators with little turnover (which is also attributed to the positive company environment that Ashley has fostered) allowed LS to build strong relationships with partners on a day-to-day basis. The consistency of LS food coordinators establishes deep trust from partner on-floor managers who interacted with them at every pickup and dropoff, giving credibility to the LS name and providing it steady ground to maintain and grow.

Joel Simonson, a food coordinator who recently assumed a new management position, came to Lovin' Spoonfuls at a time when Ashley was “really looking to add some fresh and fired up energy” into the team (Interview, Ashley Stanley). Joel did exactly that, and after accompanying Joel for a ride-along as part of our research, Katharine can attest to his incredible dedication to customer service, his awareness of place, and his passion for his work.

In 2015, LS pulled a driver off the road and into day-to-day operations so Lauren, who was doing both short and long-term systems management, could focus more on long-term development. In 2016, LS hired a director of communications, and made the crucial addition of two “floaters.” These part-time “floaters” fill in for drivers when needed on short notice. This addition increased company efficiency and output by 20% because no one had to unexpectedly come out of the office and onto the road when a driver was sick or on vacation. This position also proved so critical that the LS team includes a “floater” as a secondary “bare minimum” employee. LS has also hired two more staff for media and press, financial management, and administration. Though some of these positions are specific in action, the team values “generalists” who can perform a multiplex of tasks at high levels. A team of people with diverse skill sets will be the most useful to a nonprofit food rescue.

In 2017, the Lovin' Spoonfuls team consists of 15 people: nine food rescue coordinators (seven full-time and two floaters), executive director, chief operating officer, operations manager, development associate, communications director, and accounts payable and office coordinator. The LS team also has a five-person board of directors representing large and local businesses who support social impact and a six-person culinary panel of top culinary business owners, chefs, and spokespeople.

## **Assessment of Lovin' Spoonfuls' Partnerships: 2010—Present**

In order to better understand the growth of Lovin' Spoonfuls over its lifetime, we constructed a visual representation of the number of partnerships Lovin' Spoonfuls has had since its birth in 2010. Lauren and Joel provided us with excel spreadsheets detailing the partnerships (donors and beneficiaries) Lovin' Spoonfuls has been involved with since 2010. We created graphs to visually depict the growth of Lovin' Spoonfuls' operations from 2010 to October 2017, which are shown on the following pages. The purpose of doing so was to better understand where Lovin' Spoonfuls' began in 2010 and how it has grown since. This visual is especially useful to compare to the relationship matrix as aforementioned, as Lovin' Spoonfuls has experienced significant growth.

The hope for completing such analysis is that in future discussion with team members and community partners we could tease out how this growth occurred, who the main players were, and what tools and resources were needed to make such growth possible. Given that our primary goal throughout the course of this project was to determine and document how such growth occurred and what was most instrumental in helping Lovin' Spoonfuls do so, outlining the key trends and characteristics of successful growth would be the primary substance of our blueprint. Though the graphs below are simply a visual as to how Lovin' Spoonfuls has grown during the years, they will be particularly useful for prospective food rescue companies and eager individuals to as an example of what growth in terms of partnerships could potentially look like, and how these should occur over the lifetime of a business to ensure success. These tools and key points for how such growth is supported are highlighted in the business model blueprint.

## Lovin' Spoonfuls' Total Cumulative Donor Partnerships

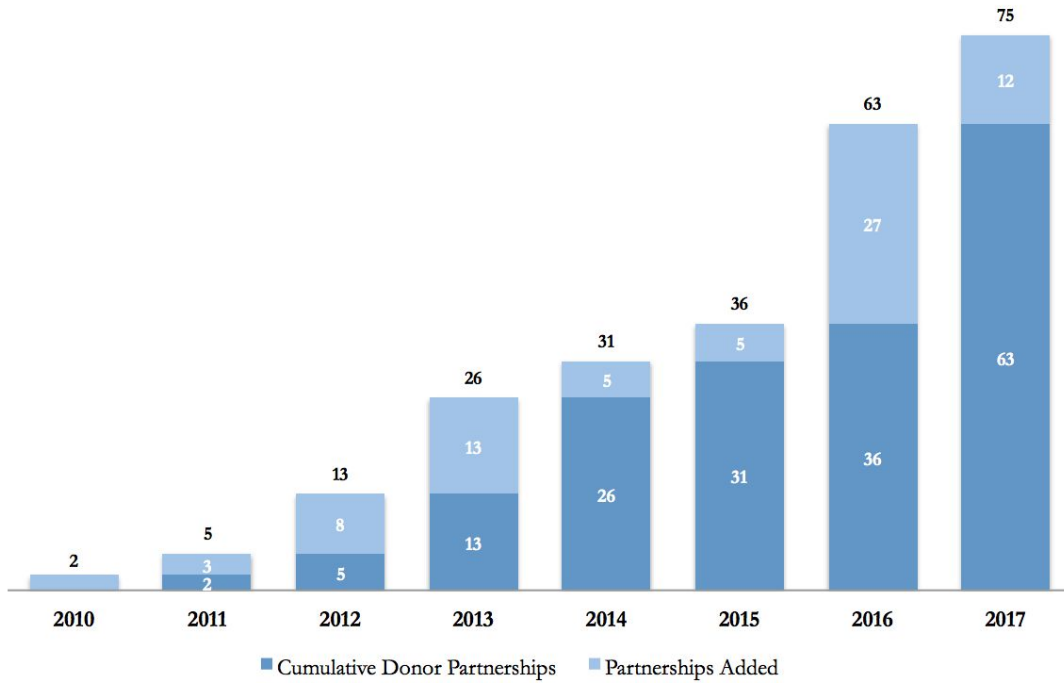


Figure 2. Total Cumulative Donor Partnerships. Since 2010, Lovin' Spoonfuls has significantly increased the number of donors LS works with. Today, LS is partnered with over 70 donors in the Greater Boston and MetroWest area.

### Lovin' Spoonfuls' Total Cumulative Beneficiary Partnerships

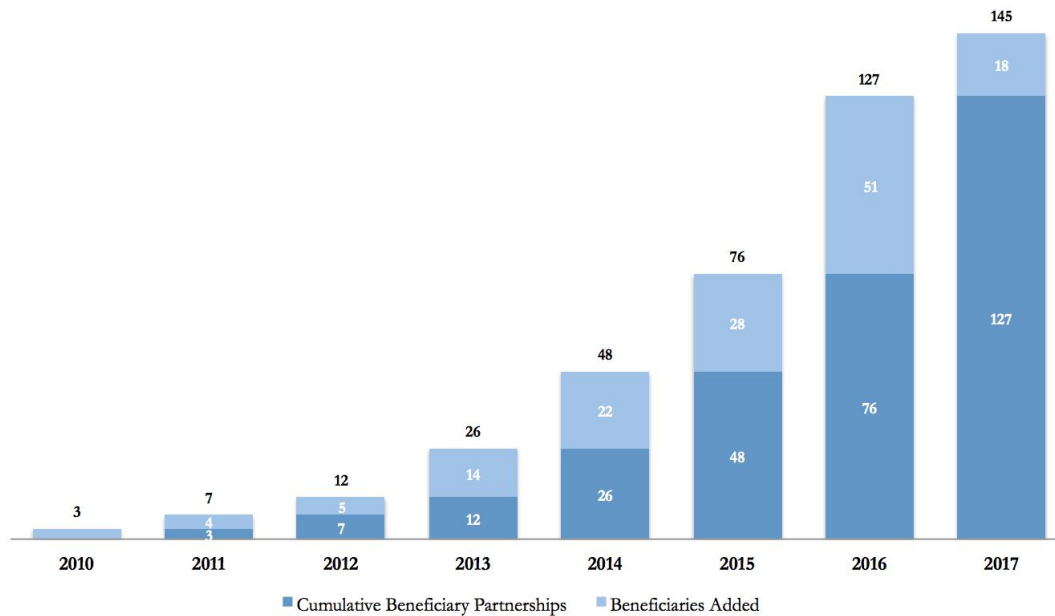


Figure 3. Total Cumulative Beneficiary Partnerships. Since 2010, Lovin' Spoonfuls has substantially increased their work with beneficiaries in the Greater Boston and MetroWest areas of Massachusetts. Today, Lovin' Spoonfuls works with over 140 beneficiaries.

### Map of Lovin' Spoonfuls Current Partnerships

Lauren and Joel provided the team with a Google Maps file of Lovin' Spoonfuls current partnerships in Massachusetts. The plotted points on the map are categorized and color-coded by the type of partnership (i.e. donor or beneficiary). We translated this map into a simple GIS model to better visualize Lovin' Spoonfuls' presence in the greater Boston and MetroWest area. In addition, Joel sent us an excel spreadsheet detailing delivery schedules and locations. We downloaded and included three approximate routes into the GIS model to highlight a few of Lovin' Spoonfuls' daily deliveries and to give a sense for their scale of operations. We believe this map is particularly useful in showing emerging food rescues just what delivery routes can look like, and how, in general, they could be categorized and further organized.

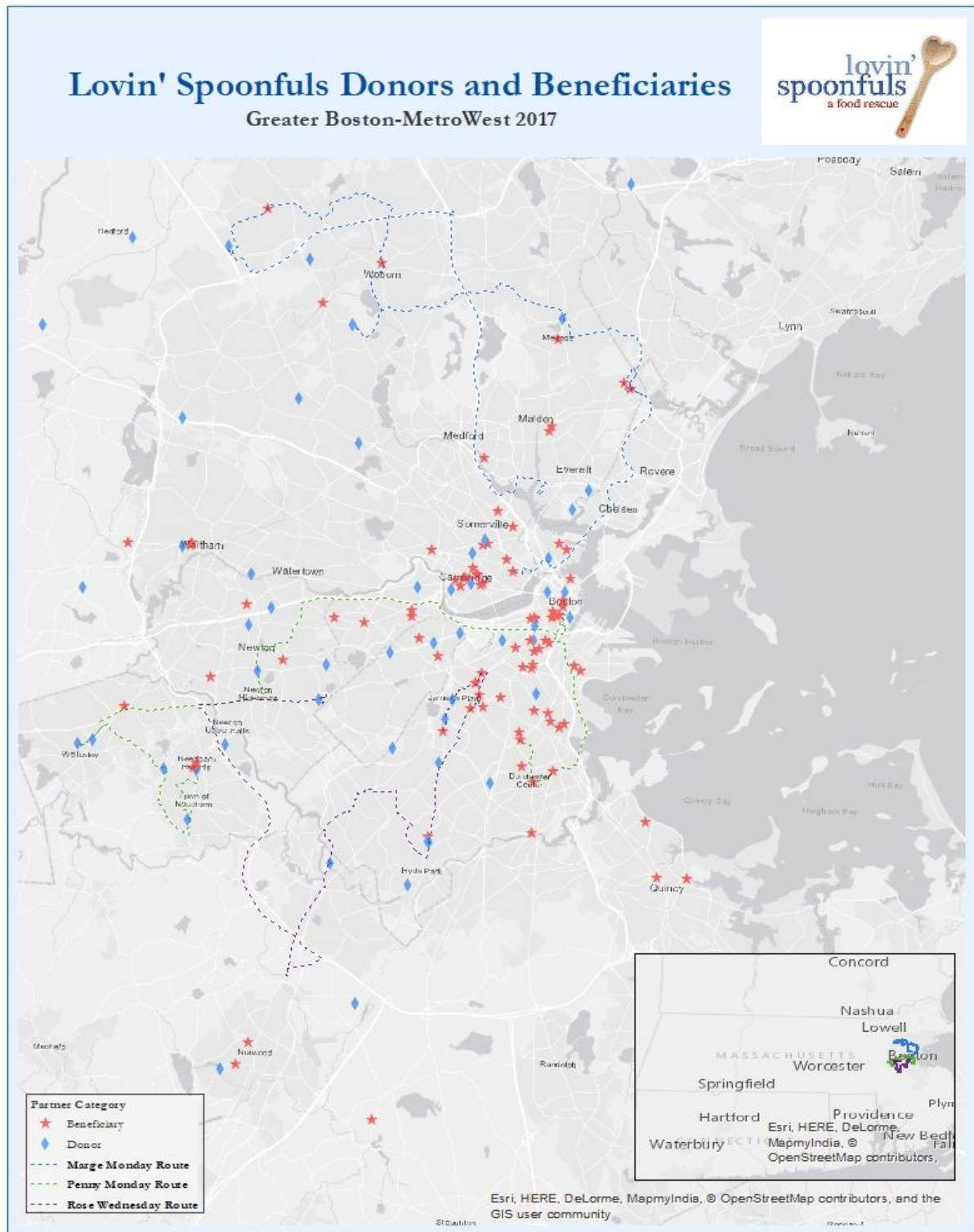


Figure 4. Map of Lovin' Spoonfuls current partnerships in Massachusetts, specifically in the Greater Boston and MetroWest areas. The red stars indicate locations of beneficiaries and the blue diamonds indicate locations of donors. Blue, green, and purple dotted lines are approximate full-day routes of three different trucks on varying days. Inset shows scope of routes with respect to the State of Massachusetts within the New England region.



## **Review of Lovin' Spoonfuls' Financial Records**

We received Lovin' Spoonfuls' financial records from 2012 and had access to additional annual 990 forms. These were used to understand the breakdown of the cost structure associated with running a food rescue business. We wanted to be able to provide early stage companies with a general picture of the costs to anticipate as organizations are established and grow. For the sake of confidentiality, we have omitted using any specific figures and instead have included general percentages (i.e. salaries are 60% of operational expenses). Our intent is that this will help companies and individuals who lack experience or who may be unaware of the relevant costs associated with running a business to understand what to expect. They will be more effective in outlining and planning budgets as their operations evolve. By their second year in operation, businesses can expect that personnel expenses will make up approximately 70-75% of total expenses, whereas auto, program, fundraising, and admin expenses will each make around 5-10% of total expenses. These figures may change in years where the company changes its practices, for example if it needs to acquire more trucks, or expand fundraising efforts.

## **Day-in-the-Life Ride Along with Lovin' Spoonfuls Food Rescue Coordinator**

On October 23, 2017, one member of the Middlebury team, Katharine Fortin, joined Joel Simonson (Food Rescue Coordinator at Lovin' Spoonfuls) on a day of delivery runs and has compiled video footage to outline a "Day in the Life" of Lovin' Spoonfuls' on-the-road operations. Through this, the Middlebury team gained exposure to the effort behind Lovin' Spoonfuls' deliveries, in addition to first-hand experience of the interactions between team

members and donors/beneficiaries. The short film supplements the business model blueprint and other deliverables by providing significant context for Lovin' Spoonfuls' on-the-road operations. We have included a private link to the “Day in the Life” video: [https://youtu.be/aAZaT\\_LEXvU](https://youtu.be/aAZaT_LEXvU)



Figure 5. Joel handing crate of fresh milk to Burlington Food Bank volunteer on the first delivery of the Monday route. Image courtesy of Katharine Fortin.

## **Interviews with Team Members, Donors, Beneficiaries, and Funders**

In order to construct our business model blueprint, we deemed it necessary to conduct interviews with team members, donors, beneficiaries, and funders. We wanted to gain a better understanding how Lovin' Spoonfuls was started, how it grew and functions today, how it builds and maintains relationships, and how it is able to be successful in the communities it operates in.

Lauren Palumbo and Joel Simonson, our primary contacts at Lovin' Spoonfuls, were kind enough to connect us with many of the community partners whom they have worked with. The interviews we conducted over the course of the semester are summarized in bullet points that highlight how Lovin' Spoonfuls has impacted their partners. The transcripts of the interviews can be found in the appendix.

### ***Interviews with Members of the Lovin' Spoonfuls Team***

#### ***3.1 Ashley Stanley, CEO/Founder of Lovin' Spoonfuls***

*Lauren Palumbo, COO, Lovin' Spoonfuls\**

*Joel Simonson, Food Rescue Coordinator, Lovin' Spoonfuls\**

\*We have not included transcripts of interviews with Joel and Lauren as they are the main substance of this report.

### ***Interview with Donor***

#### ***3.2 Karen Franczyk, Green Mission Coordinator, Whole Foods Market***

##### **What Worked for Karen?**

- The trustworthiness and organization of the business model that she feels is professional and replicable
- Outstanding communication skills, refrigerated trucks, ServSafe certifications, and committed, paid employees as drivers instead of volunteers
- Strongly believes in the company's mission statement

### ***Interviews with Beneficiaries***

#### ***3.3 Joanne Barry, Executive Director, A Place to Turn***

##### **What Worked for Joanne?**

- The ability to pick and choose what her organization needs from the delivery truck, which saves her time and energy
- LS' focus on customer satisfaction, including the time it took to make sure Joanne's staff

- was properly educated on what their partnership would look like
- LS' employees are respectful, professional, and responsive to communication

### *3.4 Claudia Mackey, Executive Director, Norwood Food Pantry*

#### What Worked for Claudia?

- The variety of food that LS comes with each time, it gives her the freedom to pick and choose what they need for that week
- The flexibility of LS to come on the days that work best with her organization's schedule
- LS's focus on customer service, including the reliability and demeanor of the employees

### *3.5 Kelsey Hampton, Director of Food Pantry and Volunteer Service, Natick Service Council*

#### What Worked for Kelsey?

- The flexibility of LS to accommodate their schedule
- LS' ability to balance their rapid growth with maintaining an organized, well run business that emphasizes customer service
- The variety of products that LS carries which allows the people she serves to have a balanced diet of healthy, nutritious food

### ***Interview with Funding Source***

### *3.6 Rebecca Gallo, Program Officer, MetroWest Health Foundation*

#### What Worked for Rebecca?

- LS meets an important health need in the area, was ready to expand their business, had certified drivers, and had the right equipment and tools to grow
- LS provides a systematic solution to the problem of food insecurity
- LS has a clear brand and goals that were made known via a strong social media presence, marketing and PR efforts

## *Overview of Internal Funding Strategy*

### *3.7 Lauren Palumbo and Joel Simonson, The Ultimate Tailgate Party Fundraiser*

#### Why This Event Works:

- Lovin' Spoonfuls employee's speak passionately about their accomplishments, goals, and why their model works
- The guests enjoy themselves through food, drinks, auctions, and raffles
- The LS team has built and remained engaged with a network through personal connections and brand visibility
- LS utilizes social media and personal networks to promote and raise awareness about the event.

## **III. Business Model Blueprint**

As a supplement to this report and the main deliverable, we have constructed the Business Model Blueprint. This is in the form of a slide deck, an effective visual that outlines a template for Lovin' Spoonfuls' business mode and includes valuable background information and resources that are useful to any early-stage business. This blueprint is tangible, shareable, and adaptable for eager individuals and prospective food rescues countrywide looking to grow and establish themselves. The blueprint is separate from this report, but as an example, we have included below a few slides of our template.



## IV. What's Next?

LS's current goals for the future are to...

1. Enhance relationship with partners

- LS is working on something called 'Annual Impact Reports,' which monitor the amount of waste each donor is diverting through their LS partnership. These reports show the amount of waste being produced by a store in relation to the average store within their chain. It also shows improvements in waste compared to the previous year.
- As seen in the video we created in packages that get sent off, it could be possible to reduce plastic use while transporting these goods. This might be something good to implement into these impact reports, especially because this ties back into the mission of reducing solid waste in landfills.

2. Expand, expand, expand!

- LS hopes to grow across Massachusetts, and potentially the United States.

Hopefully, the blueprint that we have crafted will be a good start to this.

3. LS hopes to grow a bigger team. It is currently a small team of 14 and the more people on the operations side, the more food that can be rescued to alleviate food insecurity.

However, this type of expansion falls within the limits of funding.

## V. Appendix

### Interview Transcripts

#### 3.1 Ashley Stanley, CEO/Founder of Lovin' Spoonfuls

On November 8th, 2017, the Middlebury team emailed Ashley Stanley a list of questions for her to answer. We have provided the transcript of the questions and Ashley's answers below.

*You found this issue of food waste and saw it as an opportunity to get involved in the fight to alleviate hunger. You have your car, your apartment, and maybe a few friends and family who want to help- a food rescue is born. Your first delivery is informal, but shows that this can be blown into a business. What happens next? We understand this is a loaded question and understand it's hard to answer, but who was your first phone call? Try to walk us through...*

“Sure, except it wasn't really like that. The initial 'rescue' and 'delivery' was more like R&D. Nothing about it showed it could be blown into a business. It showed a demand, and a supply. Didn't think of it as a business until much later - it was really just a response. How do we respond personally, strategically and pragmatically. Simply, even. My first phone call was to another grocery store near my house.”

*Did you put any personal funding into it? What kind of risks were you taking?*

“I had a trust that seeded LS. I was lucky enough to have resources to live on, and to put towards vehicles, supply, an employee or two and a nest egg for the organization. The risk was leaving my career. Beyond that, starting a nonprofit in an NPO rich landscape was and is a huge risk - especially Boston. But the identifiers and unique characteristics gave and continues to give LS a strong platform as a niche service provider.”

*What did your early funding efforts look like? When did you start applying for funding and who was working alongside you to make this happen?*

“Early funding efforts was looking for warm 'investment', rather donations / grants, and a few small events. I hired a grant-writer to give us a basic templates, and teach me about the space. Where to look, from whom to source...”

*Why did you think this could work in the first place? Who inspired you?*

“I didn't know whether it would or wouldn't, in terms of a sustainable business model. What I did know was that hunger relief hasn't relieved hunger. At least since I first learned what hunger was, maybe 35 years ago. If we're talking about service, I'm inspired by JFK - really the family as a whole. They truly were dedicated and relentless public servants.”

*Lauren and Joel come into the picture (at different points). They have added an immense amount to your team. Where were you right before they joined Lovin' Spoonfuls and what have they added to your team?*

“LS had begun to look at a strategic plan and board development and growth, and while that took shape I needed someone to come and really take the reins of the day to day operations. Lauren has done that ten-fold, and brought the vision and strategy to look well into the future. Joel came to us at a time where we were really looking to add some fresh and fired up energy into our Coordinator team - and he did just that!”



### ***3.2 Karen Franczyk, Green Mission Coordinator, Whole Foods Market***

On November 7th, 2017, the Middlebury team conducted a phone interview with Karen Franczyk, a Green Mission Coordinator for the North Atlantic Region at Whole Foods Market. Whole Foods is a health-focused, mission-driven supermarket chain committed to supporting sustainable agriculture and dedicated to providing the most natural and organic food available while upholding strict quality standards for their respective industry (Whole Foods Market, 2017). Given that Whole Foods is a very well-known market, we wanted to speak with Karen to discuss what it was like to work with Lovin' Spoonfuls, what she liked about the business, and to get more color on what the process of donating food looks like.

Lovin' Spoonfuls is the largest single food rescue organization with whom Whole Foods works in the Boston area. Karen complemented Lovin' Spoonfuls for their work in the beginning of the partnership when the two organizations brought store team leaders and Lovin' Spoonfuls representatives together to discuss food rescue and food insecurity and impress upon store team leaders their contribution. Nationally, Whole Foods already had core environmental values and employee environmental education, so their pre-existing waste program was easily amended to include food rescue in addition to Whole Foods' work with the Food Donation Connection.

Karen stressed the trustworthiness and organization of the Lovin' Spoonfuls model that makes it both professional and replicable. Her trust lies in their reliable communication skills, refrigerated trucks, ServSafe certifications, and committed drivers who are paid employees rather than high-turnover volunteers. Karen echoed other interviewees satisfaction when mentioning the drivers as well as three other employees whom she regularly contacts, noting that "they're always friendly, always helpful, [and] very thorough."

The partnership began before her time at Whole Foods, so she was not able to talk about how brand visibility was involved, but she mentioned that their relationship with other food pantries (and involvement in Food Donation Connection) lead them to Lovin' Spoonfuls. When asked about day-to-day issues that arise in the partnership, she mentioned an instance when miscommunication about labeling prevented food from being donated and picked-up, but she did not hear about this until later on after it was eventually fixed. When asked about any progress reports with respect to this instance that Lovin' Spoonfuls provides to Whole Foods, Karen said that there was no such thing and a monthly or even quarterly report could be useful. We may mention this to Lauren as well as suggest it in our blueprint business model for future start-ups.

The Lovin' Spoonfuls food rescue model has impressed Karen so much that she “would love to see them work with other regions at large.” Furthermore, the Lovin' Spoonfuls mission strongly resonates with Karen. Karen was kind enough to send us a magazine that Whole Foods Market publishes twice a year, and the Holiday edition this year included a page on Lovin' Spoonfuls. We have included the image below because the effective statistics and figures show how great an impact Lovin' Spoonfuls has and how well its mission can resonate with people. Lovin' Spoonfuls' mission statement dwells with Karen as well, as she too believes that “there's enough food, we just have to go get it.” She added, “I love that. I really do think that's true.”

Figure 5. Whole Foods Market publishes a magazine twice in the North Atlantic Region. For the 2017 Holiday edition, it included a page on Lovin' Spoonfuls with some facts and figures outlining what Lovin' Spoonfuls does to help feed the hungry and how Whole Foods Market specifically works with it. The numbers are especially effective in highlighting Lovin' Spoonfuls' impact and powerful mission and how their relationship with Whole Foods has helped it grow.



### 3.3 Joanne Barry, Executive Director, A Place to Turn

On November 2nd, 2017, the Middlebury team conducted a phone interview with Joanne Barry, an Executive Director at A Place to Turn. A Place to Turn is a food pantry located in Natick, Massachusetts that seeks to provide emergency food, clothing, and resources to those in need in the MetroWest area of Boston, serving over 12,000 individuals in nearly 30 towns. Through our interview with Joanne, we wanted to better understand their relationships with Lovin' Spoonfuls, the impact that LS has on the beneficiaries it collaborates with, and why Lovin' Spoonfuls' operations are so successful. Our interview with Joanne Barry embellished

two key points of our blueprint that were crucial to business success and growth: brand visibility and the necessity of excellent customer service.

Nearly a year and a half ago, the partnership formed between A Place to Turn and Lovin' Spoonfuls. Joanne mentioned that she attended a food insecurity panel and happenstance sat next to the founder of Lovin' Spoonfuls, Ashley Stanley. Today, A Place to Turn receives deliveries from Lovin' Spoonfuls three times a week. One facet that makes Lovin' Spoonfuls' delivery process unique is that beneficiaries have the ability to pick and choose what they want from the delivery truck, which allows them to better service the needs of their clients without having to take on additional and unnecessary food items. Joanne mentioned that this specifically saves significant time and energy for the food pantry. Because Lovin' Spoonfuls' trucks deliver to the back door and drivers help facilitate the selection of goods, the process of receiving and distributing items has become more time and energy efficient for A Place to Turn.

A second key piece that Joanne mentioned that has made the partnership particularly enjoyable and successful is Lovin' Spoonfuls' focus on customer satisfaction. At the onset of the partnership, employees of Lovin' Spoonfuls sat down with staff members of A Place to Turn and outlined the processes and what it would be like to work with them. Throughout this, Joanne highlighted that Lovin' Spoonfuls was dedicated to ensuring that all members of the team were on board and properly educated, as well as underlining the commitment to the greater cause of providing *healthy* food to reduce hunger as well as to improve nutrition. Providing an excellent experience for customers is a priority for Lovin' Spoonfuls, as Joanne noted, “you can read every article on [Ashley Stanley] and she is just as wonderful and personable and committed as you read about. But our delivery people—our point of contact—they are professional, personable,

they listen to what we have to say, they're on time, and that's really important, especially when it's a chaotic food pantry." Drivers and Lovin' Spoonfuls employees are respectful, responsive to emails and surveys, and are professional and personable individuals. The stellar customer service, combined with the excellent quality of food that Lovin' Spoonfuls provides makes the team particularly enjoyable and worthwhile to work with.

### ***3.4 Claudia Mackey, Executive Director, Norwood Food Pantry***

On November 3rd, 2017, a member of the Middlebury team conducted a phone interview with Claudia Mackey, the Executive Director at Norwood Food Pantry. Mackey has been at the food pantry for a number of years, but their partnership with Lovin' Spoonfuls began before her time there, so she wasn't sure how it began. Located at 150 Chapel Street in Norwood, the Norwood Food Pantry is open every Saturday and serves about 40 families each weekend. It encourages clients to use the pantry as a stepping stone toward independence. While the pantry prides itself on running entirely on volunteers, this has also proven to be a setback in operating efficiently. For one, it doesn't have trucks, or people who are working regular hours. It seeks out their volunteers via Facebook or newspapers. These volunteers then have to drive to the stores themselves, pick up any food they can, bring it directly to the pantry, and unload. Unreliable volunteers are a consistent issue—people find paying jobs, or simply have no vehicle to do the work (let alone a refrigerated vehicle). This is where Lovin' Spoonfuls comes into the equation. In the words of Ms. Mackey, "Lovin' Spoonfuls is our hero... They come along and go to all the grocers in the area, arrive with a huge refrigerated truck, and we basically shop off of it."

Since Ms. Mackey started at the Norwood Food Pantry, the impact that Lovin' Spoonfuls has on them has increased. Typically, there are grocers that are interested in donating food that would otherwise not sell. The pantry usually teams up with the Greater Boston Food Bank to arrange food delivery. It is a longer process that requires more than simply having the food picked up and dropped off *for* them as happens with LS. The most appealing thing about LS for the Norwood Food Pantry is that it only receives food that is needed and can be used. Because the pantry has limited freezer space and distributes once a week on Saturdays, it needs to be cautious about what kind of deliveries it receives and when. Mackey says, "If I get meat or produce early in the week, it's not going to be good by distribution day." The pantry only takes produce on Thursdays and Fridays, which is when Lovin' Spoonfuls is assigned to deliver.

Ms. Mackey had only good things to say about the drivers she meets with and the customer service that Lovin' Spoonfuls has to offer:

They do everything right. I can't even think of anything they do wrong. The people are 100% reliable... a joy, joy, joy, to work with. I work mostly with Jacob who is amazing and always has a smile on his face. He will call me on my cellphone if he thinks he will be early or late. There's also Vinny, and Deb is another—both also great. The crucial thing to me is that they can get to all of these grocers, and because they have enough agency and points, they can get it to people who need specific things. They have grown and have done a remarkable job. I haven't spoken to anyone in that organization who hasn't been accommodating and pleasant—that makes it that much better. It's so, so nice to have a strong young [wo]man on a refrigerated truck. We're older, retired people—we can't do that kind of work anymore. And the best part is, they do it with a smile on their face.

We asked Ms. Mackey what their food rescue system looks like aside from Lovin' Spoonfuls. She emphasized the fact that it requires more work, and is often more of a gamble. There are still some stores they pick up from directly (i.e. Shaw's); however, they often cannot control how much they are given. Sometimes she gets so much meat she can't fit it in their freezer and will

have to call other pantries. Remaining produce and meat is given to the nearby Pine Street Inn (another partner of Lovin' Spoonfuls).

### ***3.5 Kelsey Hampton, Director of Food Pantry and Volunteer Service, Natick Service Council***

On November 9th, 2017, the Middlebury team conducted a phone interview with Kelsey Hampton, the Director of Food Pantry and Volunteer Service at Natick Service Council. Ms. Hampton echoed the strength of their relationship with Lovin' Spoonfuls that all of our interviewees have boasted. For starters, we asked Ms. Hampton how the partnership with Lovin' Spoonfuls started. Similar to Ms. Mackey, she said the partnership started before her time there; however, she knew that they got connected via the MetroWest Health Foundation, which caused us to reflect on the importance of brand visibility, especially via social media.

We asked Ms. Hampton what some of the troubles of working with food rescues were. Ms. Hampton noted that they were running (and still do sometimes) into storage issues. She said, “the amount of food we get is overwhelming... and with seven part-time employees, two full-time employees, and relying on volunteers to process the donations, things became too much.” The organization added the Food Rescue Coordinator position to handle the daily deliveries.

Lovin' Spoonfuls' contributions are divided into two separate areas. Some items are put into a food pantry where items are delivered or given out. Other items are placed in a daily shopping area that is open to clients. With this, however, there are people who abuse the system. With the new partnership with Lovin' Spoonfuls, it had to reorganize their own operations to make sure that the people who are utilizing the food pantry services are being fair and the food is

being spread among as many families as possible, especially since some folks would line up knowing that the trucks were arriving. The Natick Service Council has accommodated their schedule so that Lovin' Spoonfuls drops off on Fridays for Saturday distribution days, which are handled via appointment. Lovin' Spoonfuls has been flexible. LS was "great about working with [them] and changing the drop-off time to Friday morning so that the organization did not have overflow on Saturday mornings."

Ms. Hampton spoke of the company's growth and simultaneous ability to remain well-connected with their clients:

I really can't say how well they run it enough.... They do such a great job. They are growing so fast as an organization, but still, when you talk to anyone in the organization, from the CEO down to the driver, it feels like such a closely-knit community and we've really gotten to develop great relationships with them. It feels like they have genuine interest in the success of our organization. The driver always asks how we're doing. Sometimes we get exotic foods, he says 'let's try it and tell people about it.' They're interested in our success, just as much as theirs.

We asked Ms. Hampton about the products that they receive from Lovin' Spoonfuls, to which she had only good things to say.

The main thing that's great is that we pick up donations from a lot of places in the community like cakes and muffins and stuff, and that will certainly feed people, but it's not the food that they should be eating... I know how much it means to our clients when they can take a salad and some veggies home with them, and send their kids to school with lunch and even take some lunch to take to work. We get thank you notes from our clients that appreciate the normal lifestyle that these food donations offer. For [Lovin' Spoonfuls] to continue to expand in different parts of Massachusetts where they aren't tapped into those markets would be amazing.

It is clear that the Natick Service Council's partnership with Lovin' Spoonfuls has done more than just ease their weekend operations, provide healthier food for their clients, and foster great



connections and relationships. This partnership has made a lasting difference on the amount of people that they have been able to feed. In the words of Ms. Hampton, “We’ve been able to triple the people we serve based solely on our partnership with Lovin’ Spoonfuls.” Ms. Hampton seemed to have a lot of faith in Lovin’ Spoonfuls ability to have the same immense impact on food pantries all over the state of Massachusetts.

### ***3.6 Rebecca Gallo, Program Officer, MetroWest Health Foundation***

On October 17th, 2017, the Middlebury team conducted a phone interview with Rebecca Gallo, a Program Officer at the MetroWest Health Foundation (MWHF). The foundation supports a healthy MetroWest area by providing nearly \$5 million in annual financial support to twenty-five communities in the MetroWest area of Massachusetts. The foundation supports the health needs of residents and their families by supporting community-based and community-driven programs that target health matters. It has provided over \$40 million in financial support to preventative and responsive care programs. Lovin’ Spoonfuls is in the final year of a three-year grant with the MetroWest Health Foundation. Through this interview with Rebecca, we wanted to better understand how funding works for businesses like Lovin’ Spoonfuls, as well as get more information about how businesses navigate funding processes to receive grants to support business operations.

In particular, our interview with Rebecca highlighted the significance of having excellent brand visibility with clear goals and an effective public relations platform. MetroWest Health Foundation reached out to Lovin’ Spoonfuls after seeing their brand and message and realizing that their goals were well-aligned with each other. We will highlight this as a key factor to

finding funding sources and receiving funding because for many funders such as MWHF which operates specifically as an independent health philanthropy, it is crucial that written grants support operations that align with their own goals. Lovin' Spoonfuls was an operation particularly worth supporting because, as Rebecca noted, it was meeting an important health need in the area, were ready to expand their business, had certified drivers, and possessed the right equipment and tools to grow. In addition, MWHF had previously written smaller grants to individuals involved in similar operations, but Lovin' Spoonfuls seemed to provide a more systemic solution to the problem of food insecurity, and thus for MWHF, providing financial support for such an organization was an easy decision to make.

From receiving a grant application to providing funding, it is usually about a six-week process, and most often, companies approach foundations seeking funding. However, as a result of Lovin' Spoonfuls' clear brand and goals, MWHF reached out to Lovin' Spoonfuls representatives and asked if they were interested in working together. Rebecca noted that having a strong social media presence and effective marketing and PR platforms are particularly important if companies want to be noticed by funders. As a result of their strong media efforts, Lovin' Spoonfuls was able to partner with MWHF and receive a three-year grant to help fund their operations. Three years is a typical length for a single project grant, after which companies can seek another grant through new project application. Throughout the three-year commitment, Lovin' Spoonfuls is required to provide a report every six months to provide updates to MWHF on the business operations. In terms of where the funding goes, foundations typically expect the companies to stick within the budget, and most often, the funding goes toward a particular project, though in some cases this may vary. For Lovin' Spoonfuls, the MWHF grant paid for

driver salaries and purchased a truck for on-the-road delivery operations. Lovin' Spoonfuls is in the third and final year of the grant with MWHF, after which it will have the opportunity to apply for another grant with MWHF for a new project, or seek alternative funding sources.

### ***3.7 Lauren Palumbo and Joel Simonson, The Ultimate Tailgate Party Fundraiser***

During one of our discussions with Lauren and Joel on October 26th, 2017, we talked in particular about funding. Lauren mentioned that there are multiple angles toward which companies can receive funding. One way as mentioned above, is through writing grants. For this, it is important to understand where the business can overlap with other sectors and tap into that sector for grant writing, whether it be environmental, youth-related, hunger, there are many avenues that can provide grant-writing opportunities. The other avenue for fundraising that is particularly crucial to the success of Lovin' Spoonfuls, is fundraising through private events and the support of individual donors.

One of the biggest sources of funding that Lovin' Spoonfuls is reliant on is their Ultimate Tailgate Party, an event that bring in nearly one-third of the annual budget as well as significant corporate support from funders and sponsors. The most recent installment was held on November 7th, 2017, where 500 individuals came together to Flynn Cruiseport Boston at Black Falcon Terminal. The 7th annual single-night event brought in a record-breaking \$375,000 with support from over 25 sponsors including Credit Suisse, Cafco Construction, and many other individual supporters. This year's event began with a VIP hour, during which the Thomas Menino Leadership Award was given out, and Lauren Palumbo "proudly and passionately spoke about the year's operational milestones, organizational goals, and inspired the crowd to get to

know who [they] are and why [their] model works” (Lovin’ Spoonfuls, “7th Annual Tailgate Party,” 2017). Throughout the night, guests are invited to enjoy delicious upscale food and drinks, as well as partake in a silent auction, live auction, and raffle. All items are donated by businesses and individuals. Events as such place significant emphasis on the support of individual donors and sponsors, which again highlights the necessity of network building and brand visibility, as we have pointed out throughout this report. The Ultimate Tailgate Party is an excellent example of utilizing social media and personal networks and effectively marketing to raise awareness and host an event that successfully raises funds to help Lovin’ Spoonfuls continue to operate, grow, and reach its organizational goals.

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